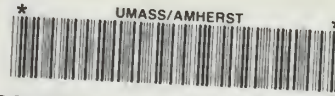


A Guide to the Turning 22 Law



For young persons with severe disabilities still in need of services, Chapter 688 serves as a bridge from educational services into the adult human services program. The law provides for a two year transitional process for those young adults who will lose their entitlement to special education upon graduation or reaching the age of 22. It creates a single point of entry into the adult human services system by developing an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) for every person with a severe disability who is found eligible.



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THE PROCESS

The Turning 22 (T-22) system is area based and designed to allow a person to remain where his or her family lives. The process for each consumer is monitored by the Bureau of Transitional Planning at the Executive Office of Health & Human Services. The local school district, through the Chapter 766 evaluation team, makes the decision whether the individual needs additional services beyond graduation or T-22.

The student and/or parents may request a T-22 referral and it must go through the local school district. The school district then forwards the case to the appropriate human services agency, 2 years prior to the termination of a student's special education.

The Transitional Agency opens a client case file, establishes eligibility and assists with a referral to the Social Security Administration or the Turning 22 Eligibility unit at MRC. The Transitional Agency is responsible for developing an ITP. Other appropriate human services agencies, school system personnel, the family and the person with the disability may participate.

ITP is approved by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and signed off by the Secretary. This plan spells out services needed and specifies those to be provided immediately upon graduation.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

All persons referred to Chapter 688 must be receiving special education services and graduating or turning 22 years of age on or after March 22, 1984 (*the effective date of the law*). They must be in need of continuing services and unable to work 20 or more hours per week in competitive, non-sheltered, non-supported employment.

HOW ELIGIBILITY IS DETERMINED

A unit at the MRC determines Turning 22 eligibility for individuals not eligible for Supplementary Security Income (SSI) by reviewing the individual's records, work evaluations and/or conducting a personal interview, when necessary.

Individuals who are automatically eligible and require no further determination include:

- Anyone receiving SSI and SSDI based on their own disability.
- Anyone listed in the registry of the blind at the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

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THE APPEALS PROCESS

All appeals are directed to the Bureau of Transitional Planning in the Executive Office of Health & Human Services (EOHHS). There are two kinds of appeals under 688:

- A person may appeal the eligibility decision that determined him/her ineligible for Chapter 688.
- A person may reject and appeal the ITP after it has been signed by the Secretary of EOHHS.

WHEN SHOULD MY SON/DAUGHTER GRADUATE?

Chapter 766 provides special education services to students until the age of 22 or until the student earns a high school diploma. Services mandated in the individual Education Plan must be provided. Once a person graduates from school, he or she is no longer eligible.

Young people and their parents should make informed decisions about the many options available under Chapter 766. Adult services are limited to appropriation by the State Legislature. It is important to consider that special education services for older students, 16-22, may be individually designed and more vocationally oriented if the current program is no longer appropriate.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

Application to the Social Security Administration for SSI eligibility determination is encouraged. In Massachusetts, regardless of the severity of one's disabilities, a person is presumed competent at age 18. Every individual 18 or over must sign all consent forms including the referral from to give permission to share information. If unable to sign, it must be signed by the person currently authorized to sign the person with a disability's Individual Education Plan. Become familiar with the adult services in your area long before your child reaches graduation or turns 22. Involve yourself with a parent group; parents have often been the stimulus in developing adult services.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Bureau of Transitional Planning.....	(617)727-7600
Massachusetts Department of Education, Special Education Division.....	(781)388-3300
Disability Law Center.....	(617)723-8455(Voice)(617-227-9464(TTY)
Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council.....	(617)727-6374 – (617)-1885(TTY)
The Federation for Children with Special Needs.....	(617)482-2915(V/TTY)
Massachusetts Brain Injury Association.....	(508)795-0244 or 797-0101(TTY)
United Cerebral Palsy.....	(617)926-5480 (617)926-8051(TTY)
Department of Mental Health.....	(617)727-5500
Department of Mental Retardation.....	(617)624-7785
Department of Public Health.....	(617)624-6000
Department of Social Services.....	(617)727-3171
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.....	(617)204-3600
Mass. Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.....	(617)695-7500 (V/TDD)1-800-882-1155
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.....	(617)727-5550
Statewide Independent Living Council.....	(617)695-2622

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment and public services provided by government agencies. If consumers or employees of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability, they should contact the Commission's Civil Rights Officer: Albert Jones, Jr., 27-43 Wormwood Street, Boston, MA 02210-1616. Telephone 617-204-3762 (voice TDD).

HOME CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



The Home Care Assistance Program (HCAP) is part of the MRC's Independent Living Division. Our goal is to enhance independence of individuals with disabilities and prevent unnecessary hospitalization or institutionalization through the provision of direct assistance with homemaking tasks.

WHAT IS HOME CARE ASSISTANCE?

The Home Care Assistance Program provides homemaker services to eligible disabled adults who are functionally limited in meeting their own nutritional and environmental needs. The assistance of a homemaker helps individuals maintain their independence in the community.

Homemaking Services are defined as direct assistance with:

Meal Preparation
Grocery Shopping
Medication Pick-Up
Laundry
Light Housekeeping (*Dusting, vacuuming, mopping floors, clean-up kitchen, cleaning bathroom and changing the bed ONLY*).

Homemaking Services are provided either by homemakers trained and supervised by Home Care Agencies in contract with HCAP, or by individual Home Care Assistants selected and supervised by the consumers and paid through contract with MRC. HCAP Case Managers assess applicants for eligibility, coordinate service provision in conjunction with the Home Care Agencies and assist consumers with information and referral as needed to advance Independent Living goals.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

HCAP Regulations cite that an individual is eligible if the individual:

- Has a disabling condition which prevents them from performing one or more homemaking tasks
- Requires homemaking assistance to prevent hospitalization or institutionalization
- Meets MRC - HCAP financial guidelines
- Is living alone* or with another who is also unable to perform homemaking
- Is between the ages of 18 and 59, inclusive
- Is not legally blind (*MA Commission for the Blind has their own program*)

* Individuals with children under 18 years old may be eligible for service if they meet all other eligibility criteria. (*However, services are provided to adults with disabilities only.*)

HOW TO APPLY:

- HCAP Case Managers take referrals from any referral source by completing an application over the phone. If the referral is made by someone other than the applicant, the Case Manager will confirm the information provided by calling the applicant.
- Other **comparable benefits** for which the applicant may be eligible will be investigated.
- Any waiting list and estimated waiting period will be discussed at that time.

Case Managers will collect financial data, medical documentation and in-home evaluation information before making a determination of eligibility and hours.

WHAT ELSE YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- HCAP services are only available to Massachusetts Residents and are subject to annual appropriation by the Massachusetts Legislature.
- HCAP provides only those services defined. We do not provide: heavy chore, spring cleaning, assistance with moving, financial management, medication monitoring, personal care, companionship, child-care or baby sitting, or accompaniment to appointments.
- There is a maximum of 12 hours per week of service. The average consumer receives 4-5 hours per week of assistance.
- Services can only be effectively provided with the mutual cooperation of the consumer and the service providers. Consumers are expected to cooperate in the assessment, delivery and review of services through direct communication between the HCAP Case Manager, consumer and service providers. Failure to resolve problems may result in a termination of services.
- Consumers' rights to due process are explained and honored in all aspects of service delivery.
- HCAP conducts periodic reviews of eligibility on each consumer.

OTHER IN-HOME PROGRAMS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:

- Those who are legally blind may contact The MA Commission for The Blind: Boston 1-800-392-6450, Worcester (508) 754-1148 and West 1-800-332-2772.
- Those age 60 & over may call The Executive Office of Elder Affairs at 1-800-882-2003 for information on The Local Elder Services Office.
- Children with disabilities may receive services through The Department of Public Health. (617) 624-5070.
- Personal care may be provided through Medicaid, CommonHealth or private agencies. Contact your local Independent Living Center for information or a Certified Home Health Agency (*ask your doctor for a referral*).

HOME CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

(617) 204-3853 (*Voice TDD*) or 1-800-223-2559
FAX #: (617) 727-2809

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Independent Living Centers Program

An overview of Independent Living

What is independent living?

Independent living is having control over one's life. This means being able to choose and control the decisions and directions for one's life to the fullest extent of one's capabilities. Disabled persons have been historically denied the right and opportunity to make their own decisions.

Independent living is also a philosophy which advocates for the availability of a range of services and options which maximize self-reliance and self-determination in all of life's activities.

What is an Independent Living Center?

Independent Living Centers are private, non-profit, consumer-controlled, community-based organizations providing services and advocacy by and for persons with all types of disabilities. Their goal is twofold; to create opportunities for independence, and to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve their maximum level of independent functioning within their families and communities.

How is independent living achieved?

Centers for independent living assist disabled individuals to achieve their self-identified goals through peer counseling, skills training, advocacy, and information and referral. Centers may also provide a range of other services such as housing referral, communication assistance, support groups, transportation, health information, and much more.

ILC's offer people with disabilities an alternative to costly and often inhumane institutionalization. Most importantly, these centers offer persons with disabilities the opportunity to make vital decisions which affect their lives, enabling them to make the transition from unwanted dependence to a full and productive life.

What else do Independent Living Centers do?

Center's for independent living serve as a strong consumer voice on a wide range of national, state, and local issues. They work to assure physical and programmatic access to housing, employment, transportation, communities, recreational facilities, and health and social services. They have been instrumental in the development of personal care services, and have worked to reduce physical barriers in a number of Massachusetts communities.

Why is community-based independent living the most economically feasible option for people with disabilities?

The average yearly cost of institutionalization is \$110,000, while the cost of independent community based living is \$35-50,000 annually.* Independent Living Centers are vital in assisting persons with disabilities to make the transition from costly institution-based settings to less expensive community based living.

Principal Features of Independent Living Services

*** Consumer control over policy and management decision -**

Persons with disabilities would control decisions governing organization policies and procedures, the provisions of services, and community activities.

*** Consumer control service objectives and method -**

This aspect of independent living services places primary responsibility for identifying service needs, setting independent living goals and objectives, and making decisions about service participation and the consumer who is receiving services.

*** Cross disability emphasis -**

Independent living emphasizes a responsiveness to the needs of all persons with disabilities. This separates the independent living program from programs that emphasize services to a particular disability group.

*** Community based and community responsive -**

Independent living centers are designed to be responsible and accessible to the disability community in their service locale, and to involve the community significantly in setting program priorities.

*** Peer role modeling -**

The emphasis on peer role modeling in independent living reflects a belief that people with disabilities can greatly benefit from the perspectives and support of others with disabilities who have successfully struggled to lead productive and meaningful lives in their communities.

*** Provision of a range of services -**

Independent living is responsive to various consumer needs for knowledge, skills, options, and support associated with achieving personal independence, a range of services is provided. These include such core services as attendant care services, housing services, transportation services, educational services, vocational services, equipment services, communication services, legal services, and social/recreational services.

*** An emphasis on community advocacy -**

Independent living recognizes that in order for consumers to achieve independent lifestyles, environmental and social barriers in the community must be eliminated. There is thus a dual commitment to both individual services and community advocacy – activities conducted to enhance opportunities for people with disabilities to have equal access to all aspects of community life and to achieve meaningful integration into society.

*** Open and ongoing access to services -**

Independent living services are open and available to consumers on an ongoing basis, reflecting consumers' evolving and continuing needs and interests.

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Massachusetts Independent Living Centers Program

Ad-Lib, Inc.
215 North Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 442-7047
TTY (413) 442-7158
Fax: (413) 443-4338
adlib@vgernet.net

Independent Living Center
of the North Shore and Cape Ann
27 Congress Street, Suite 107
Salem, MA 01970
(978) 741-0077 voice/TTY
Fax: (978) 741-1133
ilcnsca@aol.com

Boston Center for Independent Living
95 Berkeley Street, Suite 206
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 338-6665
TTY (617) 338-6662
Fax: (617) 338-6661
jet@ix.netcom.com

Metro West (Center for) Independent Living Center
63 Fountain Street, #401
Framingham, MA 01702
(508) 875-7853
Fax: (508) 875-8359
www.mwcil.org

Center for Living and Working
484 Main Street, Suite 345
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 798-0350 voice/TTY
Fax: (508) 797-4015
centerlw@ix.netcom.net

Northeast Independent Living Program
20 Ballard Road
Lawrence, MA 01843
(978) 687-4288 voice/TTY
Fax: (978) 689-4488
nilp@ultranet.com

Cape Organization for
the Rights of the Disabled
1019 Iyanough Road, #4
Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 775-8300 voice/TTY
Fax: (508) 775-702
cordwin@capecod.net

Southeast Center for Independent Living
Merrill Building, 66 Troy St.
Fall River, MA 02721
(508) 679-9210 voice/TTY
Fax: (508) 677-2377
scil@cus.net

Independence Associates
10 Oak Street, 2nd Floor
Taunton, MA 02780
(508) 880-5325 voice/TTY
Fax: (508) 880-6311
dimenet@dimenet.org

Stavros Center for Independent Living, Inc.
691 South East Street
Amherst, MA 01002
(413) 256-0473 voice/TTY
Fax: (413) 256-0190
staff@stavros.org



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Informed Choice

What is Informed Choice?

Informed choice is the process of choosing from options based on accurate information and knowledge. These options are developed by a partnership consisting of the consumer and the counselor that will empower the consumer to make decisions resulting in a successful vocational rehabilitation outcome.

What are my counselor's responsibilities in Informed Choice?

To provide you with sufficient information about your options so you can make choices for yourself. To assist you in making decisions if you need help.

What are my responsibilities in Informed Choice?

To discuss with your counselor your interests, preferences, experience, education, and goals so that your counselor can assist you in exploring and selecting goals and services you want to have in your rehabilitation program.

To work with your counselor in developing options and gathering information.

To make decisions and take actions based on the information you and your counselor have developed together.

What else can I expect from the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission to support me in making Informed Choices?

You can expect that MRC will:

- Let you know about Informed Choice in a way that you can understand it.
- Provide you with sufficient information so you can make Informed Choices about services and service providers.
- Enable you to make choices about your long-term vocational goal, your intermediate goals, the services and the service providers that you want to have in your Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).
- Allow for a change in your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor if you feel a change is needed.
- Include in your meetings with your counselor a person(s) of your choice who can assist you in your rehabilitation process.

May I consider any job goals, services or service providers?

You may discuss any options with your counselor. Your counselor will assist you in exploring ideas as well as make suggestions for you to consider.

May I choose any job goals, services or service providers I want?

You will certainly be able to choose from among what you and your counselor decide are good options for you. That is why it is so important for you to spend the time you need with your counselor to identify good options. Sometimes there may be things you would like to do or places you would like to go for services that you will not be able to choose because of laws, regulations, qualification issues and so on. Any time you face these kinds of limits to choosing what you want, your counselor will fully explain the reason for it. Occasionally, your choices may be limited by your disability, and your counselor will explain this to you. For example, a person who is legally blind cannot get a driver's license and, therefore, cannot be employed as a truck driver.

What if I feel strongly about something I want or need and my counselor says "no"?

If, after your discussions with your counselor, your counselor says "no" to a goal, service or a service provider that you want, you have several options. You may talk to your counselor's supervisor or the area office director to get another opinion or more options. You may call the MRC Ombudsperson at (617) 204-3603 and ask for assistance. You can get help from the Massachusetts Office on Disability Client Assistance Program by calling (617) 727-7440. And you can request an appeal by writing to :

Customer Relations Department
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
27-43 Wormwood Street
Boston, MA 02210

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment and public services provided by government agencies. If consumers or employees of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability, they should contact the Commission's Civil Rights Officer: Albert Jones, Jr., 27-43 Wormwood Street, Boston, MA 02210-1616, Telephone 617-204-3762 (voice/TDD).

COMISION DE REHABILITACION DE MASSACHUSETTS

Oficina Del Mediador



AYUDA CUANDO LA NECESITA

El Mediador es un miembro del la Comisión de Rehabilitación de Massachusetts (MRC) quien trabaja como un enlace de relaciones para consumidores, entre el consumidor y la comision. El/ella provee ayuda y apoyo apropiado a personas con incapacidades.

El Mediador responde a preguntas de una variedad de agencias e individuos. El Mediador puede ser contactado por el consumidor, un miembro de familia, un defensor del Programa de Asistencia para Clientes (CAP), personal médico, o empleados de MRC. Las preocupaciones acerca de los Consumidores varían extensamente y pueden ser acerca de demoras en los servicios, sus derechos legales dentro el sistema, o provisión de servicios especializados.

El Mediador, después de revisar una queja, trabaja con el consumidor y con el trabajador de MRC para abrir el proceso de comunicación y proveer negociaciones para resolver el problema.

Si alguna situación no puede ser resuelta con la ayuda del Mediador, entonces el consumidor puede elegir la opción de iniciar alguno de los procesos de apelación, los cuales son un Repaso Administrativo Informal o una Apelación Justa e Imparcial.

MRC realiza determinaciones de elegibilidad en reclamos de incapacidad a través de su División de Determinación de Incapacidad (DDS). El Mediador también provee ayuda a personas que solicitan el Seguro Social y a los beneficiarios de la Renta de Seguridad Suplementaria (SSI) y del Seguro de Incapacidad de Seguridad Social (SSDI).

El Mediador puede ser contactado a travez de los telefonos (617) 204-3600, 1-800-245-6543 (voz ó TDD) a través de la siguiente dirección:

MRC Mediador
Unidad de Relaciones para Clientes
Fort Point Place, Suite 600
27-43 Wormwood Street
Boston, MA 02210-1616

La ley para personas con incapacidades de 1990 (ADA) prohíbe discriminación por razones de incapacidad, en empleo y servicios públicos provistos por agencias de gobierno. Si consumidores o empleados de la Comision de Rehabilitacion de Massachusetts cree que ha sido victima de discriminacion en su contra ppor razones de incapacidad, se pueden poner en contacto con el corrdinador de la ley ADA, Albert Jones, Jr., 27-43 Wormwood Street, Boston, MA 02210, teléfono 617-204-3762 (voz/TDD).



OMBUDSPERSON OFFICE

HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

The Ombudsperson is a Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (*MRC*) staff member who functions as a customer relations liaison between the consumer and the Commission. He/she provides appropriate assistance and support to people with disabilities.

The Ombudsperson responds to inquiries from a variety of agencies and individuals. The Ombudsperson may be contacted by the consumer, a family member, a CAP advocate, medical personnel, or MRC staff. Consumer concerns vary widely and might be about issues such as delays in service, their legal rights within the system, or provision of specialized services.

The Ombudsperson, after reviewing a complaint, works with consumers and MRC staff by opening up the communication process and providing problem-solving negotiations.

If an issue cannot be resolved with the assistance of the Ombudsperson, then the consumer may take advantage of their options through a process of appeals, such as an Informal Administrative Review or an Impartial Fair Hearing.

MRC makes determinations of eligibility on disability claims through its Disability Determination Division (*DDS*). The Ombudsperson also provides assistance to Social Security claimants and to beneficiaries of Supplemental Security Income (*SSI*) and Social Security Disability Insurance (*SSDI*).

The Ombudsperson may be contacted by telephone at (617) 204-3600 or 1-800-245-6543 voice or TTY or by writing to the following address:

MRC Ombudsperson
Customer Relations Unit
Fort Point Place, Suite 600
27-43 Wormwood Street
Boston, MA 02210-1616

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Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS)

WHAT IS SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)?

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program is a federal assistance program in which a person with a disability receives cash payments and medical benefits. To qualify for SSI, an individual:

- must be medically disabled by Social Security definitions; and
- must meet the Income and Resource test. That is, the person must not have income or resources which are greater than the limits set by Congress. Resources may include possessions such as savings, stocks and bonds.

WHAT INCOME IS NOT COUNTED AS PART OF "INCOME AND RESOURCES"?

In deciding whether a person qualifies for SSI payments and, if qualified, how much the payments will be, Social Security will not count certain income amounts. Some of these include:

- an amount of \$20.00 a month from total income. The \$20.00 will be deducted first from unearned income, if any. If there is no unearned income, the \$20.00 will be deducted from earned income; and
- for earned income only – an additional amount of \$65.00 a month plus one half of the remaining amount.
- income set aside for a PASS that is approved by the Social Security Administration.

WHAT IS A PASS?

A PASS is a special provision in the SSI program which permits a person with a disability to set aside specific income or resources, such as savings or stocks, from being counted by Social Security so that the individual:

- who is over income or resources limits for SSI may qualify for SSI; or
- who is currently eligible for SSI, may set aside earned income so their SSI check will not be reduced.

Income which is not counted because it is being used in a PASS can either be earned, such as wages from a job or work-study, or unearned, such as pensions or SSDI cash payments. For example, if a person who is receiving on SSDI payments can set aside part of all of these payments in a PASS, that person may also become qualified for SSI benefits.

WHAT CAN A PASS BE USED FOR?

A PASS may be used to assist the person to attain or regain the ability to become self-supporting. Income saved or spent as part of an approved PASS can only be used to purchase goods and services necessary to achieve the occupational objective. Some examples of such goods and services are:

- equipment necessary to initiate or maintain a trade or business;
- educational or vocational training which is necessary to achieve the occupational objective;
- items associated with this training, such as maintenance and meals at school, books, special equipment and transportation;
- required uniforms; and
- transportation to employment or training, such as the purchase of a vehicle.

WHO CAN WRITE A PASS?

Self-support plans may be written by the person requesting the plan, a vocational rehabilitation agency, a public or private social service agency, or any other group or individual assisting the person requesting the plan. Most plans are written by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors for their clients. If a plan is written by someone outside the VR agency, the Social Security District Office may ask the VR agency to indicate whether the plan is likely to succeed.

An SSA claim representative may assist in writing a PASS.

WHO CAN APPROVE A PASS?

Only Social Security Administration can approve a PASS. If a PASS requires modification before approval, SSA will help with the necessary changes. If a PASS is not acceptable and denied, this decision may be appealed through a local Social Security Office.

CAN A PASS BE AMENDED AFTER IT BEGINS?

If there are changes in the individual's income, expenses or other circumstances after the PASS begins, it may be possible to amend the plan. Amendments, including any extensions to an existing PASS, must be approved by SSA.

IS THERE A TIME LIMIT FOR A PASS?

A PASS can last for an initial period of 18 months and may be extended for one additional period of 18 months, if necessary, for most goods and services. If a person is in an educational or training program, a plan can be continued for an additional 12 months, for a total of 48 months. The plan will remain in effect as long as the individual continues to receive SSI benefits and complies with the requirements of the plan. A plan can be revised at any time, subject to approval by the Social Security Administration.

If Social Security terminates the individual's SSI benefits because he/she is no longer disabled under Social Security Law, the PASS is also terminated. The PASS may also be terminated if the individual fails to comply with the requirements of the plan.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A PASS?

The PASS must be in writing and contain the following information:

- The PASS must state a clear and realistic work goal.
- Your goal must be a job or business that will produce sufficient income to reduce your dependency on SSI payments.
- The PASS must state the amount and sources of income or resources that will be set aside and identify sufficient disposable income for the individual to live on.
- The PASS must state how you will spend the money.
- You must be able to achieve the goal of the PASS within a specified period of time.

PASS FOR CLIENTS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION (MRC)

A PASS can be used by qualified MRC clients to purchase goods and services which may or may not be authorized for purchase by MRC. For example, a plan can be written so that client may save for a vehicle, which is an item that MRC cannot purchase. Also, a PASS can be used to pay for goods and services above the allowable amounts that MRC can pay under agency regulations. For example, a plan can permit an SSI recipient to save for college tuition expenses above allowable MRC limits.

To learn more about a PASS and whether you qualify contact: The Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.

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PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) is the sole state agency charged with the administration of the federal state Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Division, serving all individuals with disabilities, except persons who are blind. The Disability Determination Services Division fulfills the adjudicatory functions for the Social Security Administration's income benefit program.

THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DIVISION

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is an employment focused program for people with physical and/or mental disabilities whose handicapping conditions present barriers to employment and who can benefit from VR. Once eligible, a variety of employment oriented services may be provided for an individual. These might include evaluation and assessment, counseling and guidance, vocational planning, training, resume writing, interviewing seminars, job placement services and other follow-up services.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

Community Based Employment Services—locally based grants providing transitional supported work services for people with disabilities.

Extended Employment Program—provides employment for severely disabled persons who can maintain at least 25% work productivity in a work setting. Some people enter part or full-time community based competitive employment as a result of this program.

Services for Deaf Individuals—provided via a statewide network of specialized rehabilitation counselors at the area offices.

Bilingual Specialty Services—available at each area office by arrangement.

THE INDEPENDENT LIVING DIVISION

The Independent Living Division (IL) provides coordination, information, referral and counseling to people with severe physical and/or mental disabilities. Its goal is to assist individuals with severe disabilities to live independently in the community. Services are primarily intended for persons not yet ready to enter VR Division programs.

PROGRAMS OFFERED INCLUDE:

IL Centers Programs—a statewide network of centers and programs which provide a variety of services to individuals with severe disabilities so they may live independently. Some services include peer counseling, skills training, advocacy, and on a limited basis, adaptive housing, transportation and other supportive services to eligible individuals.

Home Care Assistance Program—provides Homemaking Services for adults with disabilities ages 18-59, who live alone and/or with minor children under age 18, and are at risk of hospitalization.

Personal Care Assistance—provides in-home assistance with personal care needs to people with severe mobility impairments who are employed. New applicants will be referred to Mass. Health (*CommonHealth*).

Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP)—provides case management services to people who have sustained a traumatic head injury. SHIP works with private vendors, hospitals, neuropsychologists and other agencies to develop programs and to deliver services to meet individual client needs.

Consumer Involvement Program—provides an agency-wide communication structure for receiving input from consumers in an effort to support the operation of the Rehabilitation Advisory Council, numerous Regional Consumer Advisory Councils and other consumer rehabilitation forums.

THE DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES DIVISION

The Disability Determination Services Division (*DDS*) determines eligibility for Social Security Disability Income (*SSDI*) and Supplemental Security Income (*SSI*) for individuals who have a medically determined physical or mental impairment which precludes them from working for 12 months or more, or is expected to result in death.

DDS is federally funded and regulated by the Social Security Administration and managed by MRC. Disability determination examiners review claims for potential referral to the other MRC Divisions for vocational rehabilitation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL THE APPROPRIATE TELEPHONE NUMBERS LISTED BELOW. ALL LINES ARE TDD ACCESSIBLE.

Administration Office (<i>voice</i>).....	204-3600	Extended Employment.....	204-3854
.....	1-800-245-6543	Services for the Deaf.....	204-3734
TDD answering machine.....	204-3868	Independent Living Division.....	204-3851
General Information.....	204-3600	Home Care Assistance.....	204-3853
Ombudsperson.....	204-3600	Statewide Head Injury Program.....	204-3852
Commissioner's Office.....	204-3600	Personal Care Assistance (<i>Mass. Health</i>).....	1-800-223-2559
Van Adaptation/Adaptive Housing.....	204-3855	Consumer Involvement.....	204-3851
Injured Worker's Program.....	204-3855	DDS.....	1-800-223-3212 (<i>TDD</i>)
Eligibility Unit/Turning 22.....	204-3851	1-800-422-7200 (<i>Boston</i>)
Supported Work Programs.....	204-3854	1-800-551-5532 (<i>Worcester</i>)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (*ADA*) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, and public services provided by government agencies. If consumers or employees of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability, they should contact the Commission's Civil Rights Officer, Albert Jones, Jr., 27-43 Wormwood Street, Boston, MA 02210-1616 Telephone 204-3762 (*voice/TDD*).

REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY



Rehabilitation technology is the application of technology to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Its purpose is to eliminate barriers and enhance opportunities in education, rehabilitation, employment, transportation, independent living and recreation. Assistive technology includes devices, aides and enhancements used in rehabilitation technology.

Rehabilitation technology services are provided for people with severe mobility, learning, emotional, visual, hearing, neurological, neuromuscular and other disabilities. They may be provided:

- to enhance functional capacities by eliminating or minimizing functional limitations imposed by disability.
- to lead to and/or expand vocational rehabilitation, independent living rehabilitation, and employment opportunities by eliminating barriers.
- to conduct eligibility determinations and to develop an Individual Plan for Employment.

HOW ARE SERVICES PROVIDED?

THE PROCESS:

- A person with a disability applies for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to the MRC VR Program —or—applies for Independent Living Rehabilitation services of the MRC Independent Living (IL) Rehabilitation Program.
- The consumer is referred to the Rehabilitation Technology Unit by their VR Counselor or IL Specialist.
- The Rehabilitation Technology Department conducts necessary consultation and evaluations with the referring persons, clients, consumers, employers, and agencies, and other service providers.
- Recommendations will then be made to the referring persons and the consumer.
- Necessary follow-up will be initiated by the referring person with consultation from the Rehabilitation Technology Department as necessary.

Comparable Benefits: Consideration of comparable benefits is not required for rehabilitation technology services. Other resources readily available to the individual should be utilized whenever possible.

Financial Need: Rehabilitation technology services provided as part of assessment are not subject to financial need. Rehabilitation technology services provided as a rehabilitation service under an IPE are subject to financial need.

Right to Appeal: An individual may request an appeal concerning an unresolved dispute, a decision to suspend, reduce or terminate services, or denial of rehabilitation technology services. Prior to appeal, the individual may be able to resolve the disputes through the MRC office director or IL director, the Client Assistance Program, or the MRC Ombudsperson.

WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?

MRC's Rehabilitation Technology Department provides advice and consultation regarding the availability, quality and application of technologies such as technological aids and devices.

Services can include:

- Vehicle modification and inspection
- Communication devices
- Environmental control devices
- Assistive computer software
- Technical assistance to employers and service providers
- Training and follow-up on the use of any equipment provided
- Adaptive housing
- Mobility devices
- Computer hardware adaptations
- Workside modifications

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL THE REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT AT 617-204-3855.

MRC AREA OFFICES

Boston District	617-357-8137
Brockton Area	508-583-1530
Brookline Area	617-739-9080
Fall River Area	508-678-9041
Fitchburg Area	978-345-1715
Greenfield Area	413-774-2326
Holyoke Area	413-536-8200
Hyannis Area	508-862-6600
Lawrence Area	978-685-1731
Lowell Area	978-458-4544
Malden Area	781-324-7160
Milford Area	508-478-0700
Natick Area	508-651-7531
New Bedford Area	508-993-6255
North Adams Area	413-663-5391
Pittsfield Area	413-499-2720
Plymouth Area	508-747-5922
Quincy Area	617-471-1600
Roxbury Area	617-442-5510
Salem Area	978-745-8085
Somerville Area	617-776-2662
Springfield Area.....	413-736-7296
Sturbridge Area	508-347-7661
Taunton Area	508-823-8141
Walpole Area	508-668-8912
Woburn Area	781-932-9163
Worcester Area	508-792-7280

INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS

Ad-Lib, Pittsfield	413-442-7047
Boston Center for IL, Boston ...	617-338-6665
Center for Living & Working, Worcester	508-798-0350
CORD, Hyannis	508-775-8300
Metro-West Independent Living Program, Framingham	508-875-7853
Independence Associates, Brockton	508-559-9091
Ind. Living Program of the North Shore, Lynn	781-593-7500
Northeast Independent Living Program, Lawrence	978-687-4288
Southeast Center for Independent Living, Fall River	508-679-9210
Stavros, Amherst	413-256-0473
Extended Employment	617-204-3854
Services for the Deaf	617-204-3734
Independent Living Division ...	617-204-3851
Home Care Assistance	617-204-3853
Statewide Head Injury Program	617-204-3852
Personal Care Assistance	617-204-3853
Consumer Involvement	617-204-3851
DDS	1-800-223-3212 (TTD)
.....	1-800-422-7200 (Boston)
.....	1-800-551-5532 (Worcester)

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STATEWIDE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT



WHAT IS THE STATEWIDE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT?

The Statewide Employment Services Department (SES) is part of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. SES administers programs and provides supports to assist people with severe disabilities who are underserved or unserved to exercise their right to choose, obtain and retain meaningful community based employment with long term supports as needed and be paid in accordance with their skills and abilities.

WHAT SERVICES DOES SES PROVIDE?

- Information: Identification of programs and resources available; assistance to individuals to obtain needed services for employment utilizing informed choice.
- Employment Coordination: Assistance in planning and the coordination of resources to meet the individuals' needs in order to obtain and maintain employment.
- Community Based Employment Services: A range of services including supported employment.
- Qualified CBES Provider List: Find a provider near you.
- Extended Employment: For individuals with disabilities.
- Technical Assistance: Service providers, schools, public agency staff, consumers, advocate groups and parents can receive assistance to develop or obtain employment services for people with disabilities. In addition to these services, specific grants are usually administered to enhance this aspect of SES.
- Trainings and Seminars: Can be arranged for group or individual instruction in any of the above areas especially informed choice.
- Dissemination of Resource Information: SES acts as a clearinghouse regarding information about Community Based Employment.

INTERAGENCY ACTIVITY:

Informed Choice Initiative

This initiative targets individuals currently receiving employment services, individuals that will be transitioning from school to work, and members of culturally diverse communities. The intent of all outreach activities is to educate consumers about available resources and their right to choose their preferred employment option.

This initiative has been funded by the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Program to address the concern that consumers are not educated about their employment options. Consumer consultants have been hired by the SES to research available employment options, develop educational materials, and conduct educational forums for consumers and family members. They will also advocate for the conversion of segregated employment slots into integrated employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities.

Employee Assistance Program Partnership Network

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's) interested in expanding their service areas and companies which desired or need training regarding the effects of disability related issues on work activities may benefit from the partnership. Traditionally State Agencies have provided funding and technical assistance to Community Rehabilitation Providers who specialize in assisting individuals with disabilities maintain employment. Through this initiative SES provides resources to establish a network that brought together representatives from the rehabilitation and business communities. SES assist EAP's, State Agencies and Community Rehabilitation Providers in utilizing existing resources to support people with disabilities on the job. The goal of the network is to give EAP's the information necessary to identify and implement tools that will alleviate obstacles to the worksite and job satisfaction. This information may in turn be presented to direct supervisors and managers, those typically struggling with such issues.

Disability Employment Program

Designed as a way for the Commonwealth to improve its ability as an employer of persons with disabilities, the Disability Employment Pilot Project matches the hiring needs of state government, with the abilities and interests of a largely untapped resource. The Human Resources Division and the Employment Services Action Council created this project to assist state agencies, which are missing a significant applicant pool. The formation of a subcommittee, which included a large number of agency representatives operationalized an approach, which emphasizes the integration of individuals with disabilities into the present state structure as seamlessly as possible.

HOW DO I OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION?

Obtain further information by calling (617) 204-3854. SES staff will discuss the application process for services and technical assistance and attempt to answer any questions that you may have or E-mail to the addresses below.

**Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
27-43 Wormwood Street
Boston, MA 02210**

**Claire T. Ghiloni - Director
E-Mail: Claire.Ghiloni@mrc.state.ma.us**

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM



THE MISSION OF THE MRC VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The mission of the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program is to assure the provision of appropriate vocational rehabilitation services for eligible consumers so they may enter part or full-time community based, competitive employment.

WHAT IS THE MRC VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM AND ITS RESULTS?

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program serve eligible individuals with disabilities who are available and able to attain employment as a result of vocational rehabilitation services.

The MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program is the federal-state vocational rehabilitation program focused on assisting individuals with a severe disability(s) to become employed. The successful result from the MRC-VR Program is employment in a competitive job. Ideally, the consumer obtains his/her own job, with assistance from the MRC-VR staff and others working with the consumer to secure employment. Once employed, the MRC-graduate-consumer may wish to pursue getting "the job"/reaching the consumer's ultimate employment goal.

SERVICES PROVIDED TO THE ELIGIBLE CONSUMER

(Some of the MRC-VR services available; based on an Individual Plan for Employment for each consumer):

- Vocational counseling, guidance and assistance in job placement;
- Training program, including college, if appropriate, to attain entry level employment;
- Rehabilitation technology services;
- Occupational licenses, tools, initial stocks & supplies for work;
- Job coach services;
- Community Based Employment Services
- Assistance to develop a "PASS" *(for SSI recipients)* to work;
- Van modification services;
- Housing Adaption services;
- Necessary & appropriate vocational rehabilitation services based on an individual IPE.

WHO PAYS?

When possible, the consumer and/or family financially participates in the individual vocational rehabilitation plan; based on a Financial Need Determination by the MRC.

The MRC-VR first utilizes comparable benefits that are available: such as PELL Grants, Health Insurance, services available from other agencies to which the individual is deemed eligible.

WHEN SHOULD I APPLY?

You can apply at any time. For high school age students with disabilities, it is suggested that you apply 2 years before high school graduation or before turning age 22, whichever comes first. There is no upper age limit to apply.

QUESTIONS

Contact one of the 27 MRC-VR Offices, or
MRC Ombudsperson (1-800-245-6543)

IMPORTANT

This notice contains information about your rights or obligations, and should be translated immediately. If you need a translator ask for a listing of translation services.

IMPORTANTE

Questo avviso contiene informazioni sui vostri diritti e doveri e deve essere tradotto immediatamente. Se avete bisogno di un servizio di traduzione, richiedete una lista di tali servizi.

IMPORTANTE

Este aviso contém informações sobre os seus direitos e obrigações e deve ser traduzido imediatamente. Se precisar de uma tradução, peça uma lista de agências de tradução no escritório.

IMPORTANTE

Este aviso contiene información acerca de sus derechos y obligaciones y debe ser traducido inmediatamente. Si usted necesita un servicio de traducción, pida un listado de dichos servicios en la oficina.

IMPORTANT

Cet avis contient des renseignements sur vos droits et vos obligations et doit être traduit immédiatement. Si vous avez besoin d'une traduction, demandez une liste des agences de traduction.

重要事項

此通知包含您的權利和義務，應立即被翻譯。如果您需要翻譯服務，請向本辦公室索取翻譯服務名單。

ສຳຄັນ

ກຳລັງການນີ້ມີຂໍ້ມູນກ່ຽວກັບລິຂະສິດຂອງທ່ານ ແລະ ຜົນຕາຍຕໍ່ໂຕທັນທີ. ຖ້າທ່ານຕ້ອງການການແປ, ໂຕ້ຖານຕໍ່ບັນຊີບຊີ້ນຳມາກໍຈະໄດ້ເອກະຊົນຂອງທ່ານ. ປະຈຳກົວໜອງທ່ານ.

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ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ

Αυτή η ειδοποίηση περιέχει πληροφορίες για τα δικαιώματά σας ή τα όσα υποχρεώσεις σας και πρέπει να μεταφραστεί αμέσως. Εάν χρειάζεστε μεταφράση, ζητήστε να σας δώσουν ένα κατάλογο μεταφραστών στο Γ.Υ. Υποφύλιο της περιοχής σας.

QUAN TRONG

Bản thông cáo này bao gồm những quyền và nghĩa vụ của bạn và cần được dịch ngay tức khắc. Nếu cần người dịch, xin quý vị hỏi.

General Information About Who Can Assist You For Your Personal Needs
Mass. Networks of Information Providers for People With Disabilities
1-800-642-0249

For Referral to 1 of 10
Independent Living Centers in Massachusetts
(call for the one near you)
1-800-223-2559

Assistance/Advocacy Services
Mass. Office on Disability
1-800-322-2020

MRC Ombudsperson for a problem with the MRC
1-800-245-6543
(or call the Director of the office serving you)

Social Security Information
1-800-772-1213

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